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Newport, R.I.**

**Taiwan's "Will to Fight" and Implications for U.S. Operations**

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Provost, Naval War College,  
for consideration in the Prize Essay Competition  
in the Admiral Richard G. Colbert Memorial Prize category.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily  
endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

**23 May 2008**

## **Abstract**

### *Taiwan's "Will to Fight" and Implications for U.S. Operations*

In a conflict with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Taiwan's "will to fight" is its strategic center of gravity – the source of massed moral strength, whose degradation would have a decisive impact on Taiwan's ability to resist the enemy. The PRC would attack this center of gravity through operations designed to disrupt Taiwan's economy, degrade its infrastructure, attrit its military defenses, and terrorize its population, thereby undermining Taiwan's national morale and bringing about a collapse of the will to fight.

Many analysts have expressed concern that a massive coercive campaign by the PRC could succeed in rapidly undermining the will to fight and forcing Taiwan's capitulation before the United States could effectively intervene. This paper will explore issues involving Taiwan's will to fight and the implications for U.S. operations in the western Pacific. This paper argues that, in the face of a campaign of military coercion by the PRC, Taiwan's will to fight is not likely to collapse before effective assistance can arrive, and that the United States should therefore be prepared to conduct operations that will support Taiwan's national morale, increasing the chances that Taiwan's resolve will outlast that of the PRC.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Taiwan Strait is the most dangerous flash-point in Asia, with a major regional conflict involving the United States, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Republic of China (Taiwan), and Japan a real possibility. In the near term, the most likely scenarios would involve a PRC coercive campaign in the form of economic sanctions or military measures designed to intimidate Taiwan into accepting PRC terms. In a conflict with the PRC, Taiwan's "will to fight" is its strategic center of gravity – the source of massed moral strength, whose degradation would have a decisive impact on Taiwan's ability to resist the enemy.<sup>1</sup> The PRC would attack this center of gravity through operations designed to disrupt Taiwan's economy, degrade its infrastructure, attrit its military defenses, and terrorize its population, thereby undermining Taiwan's national morale and bringing about a collapse of the will to fight.

Many analysts have expressed concern that a massive coercive operation by the PRC could succeed in undermining the will to fight and forcing capitulation before the United States could effectively intervene.<sup>2</sup> Yet, amongst the mountains of analysis on the opposing forces, strategies, economic considerations, weather, terrain, and bathymetric conditions, there has been comparatively little examination of factors that might support or undermine Taiwan's will to fight in a conflict.<sup>3</sup> This paper will explore issues involving Taiwan's will to fight and the implications for U.S. operations in the western Pacific. This paper argues that, in the face of a campaign of coercion by the PRC, Taiwan's will to fight is not likely to collapse before effective assistance can arrive, and that the United States should therefore be prepared to conduct operations that will support Taiwan's national morale, increasing the chances that Taiwan's fighting spirit will outlast that of the PRC.

## **BACKGROUND: The 1995-96 Strait Crisis**

By way of background and as an example, it will be useful to review the last major PRC coercive operation against Taiwan. In 1995, Taiwanese President Lee Teng-ui was permitted to visit the United States and deliver an address at Cornell University, his alma mater. Lee's visit and speech incensed the PRC, which viewed Lee's visit as a step toward greater international recognition of Taiwan. The PRC recalled its ambassador to the United States and cancelled high-level exchanges.<sup>4</sup> And the PRC did not limit itself to diplomatic protests: In July of 1995, after warning sea and air traffic to avoid the area, the PRC launched a volley of ballistic missiles into waters north of Taiwan.<sup>5</sup> The pressure escalated in August with large scale military exercises simulating a blockade and amphibious attack on Taiwan.<sup>6</sup>

Despite private calls for restraint from the highest-levels of the Clinton administration, and a rare passage through the Taiwan Strait by the USS *Nimitz* (CVN 68), the PRC continued to ratchet-up tension in the months leading up to Taiwan's March 1996 presidential election.<sup>7</sup> On March 8, the PRC initiated another round of ballistic missile exercises, this time designed to cut the sea lines of communication to Kaohsiung and Keelung, Taiwan's largest ports.<sup>8</sup> The U.S. eventually responded with its largest display of military force in the Taiwan Straits since the 1950s: the dispatch of two carrier battle groups. The crisis then died down without further escalation.

This PRC coercion campaign against Taiwan had dramatic short-term effects on the island's economy. Taiwan's stock market suffered a 20 percent fall from July to August 1995.<sup>9</sup> Taiwan's currency plummeted to a four year low.<sup>10</sup> Shipping and air traffic into and out of the island was diverted or cancelled.<sup>11</sup> But while the missile blockade had a

significant short-term economic impact, from a political standpoint, it backfired: President Lee was reelected with a greater than expected majority as popular support rallied to him during the crisis.<sup>12</sup>

If another coercion campaign against Taiwan were launched today, the ability of the United States to successfully counter the PRC challenge is far from assured. In the years since the 1996 Strait Crisis, PRC military capabilities have dramatically increased, while the ability of Taiwan and United States to deter the PRC has not kept pace. In today's more threatening strategic environment, how is Taiwan's will to fight likely to hold up when faced with a campaign of PRC coercion? In the event of a conflict, what can the United States do to help ensure that Taiwan's will to fight does not collapse?

## **ANALYSIS**

### **PRC Coercive Options against Taiwan**

The paper considers potential PRC coercion efforts against Taiwan, aimed at forcing the Taiwanese to accept "unification" on PRC terms. "Economic coercion" measures, such as sanctions, are a commonly used tool in international diplomacy. "Military coercion" refers to the use of force by one state in order to compel another state to alter its behavior.<sup>13</sup> For example, the 1996 PRC "missile blockade" was, in part, an attempt to intimidate Taiwanese voters from supporting President Lee, thereby discouraging further moves toward independence.<sup>14</sup> In Operation ALLIED FORCE, the 1999 bombing campaign against Serbia, NATO attempted to compel Serbia to end its ethnic cleansing campaign in Kosovo.<sup>15</sup> A state's use of limited "military coercion" contrasts with the alternative of a "brute force"

campaign of invasion, regime change, and occupation, such as the Allied effort against Nazi Germany in World War II, or Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

By its nature, a coercion campaign requires the target state to submit to the demands of the coercing state. Accordingly, if the target state refuses to submit, the coercion fails. Faced with a PRC coercion campaign attempting to impose "unification," Taiwan's strategic objective is to maintain resistance until external or internal pressure compels the PRC to abandon its efforts. Therefore, the Taiwanese will to fight is the strategic center of gravity – its the source of massed moral strength. The PRC will attempt to degrade Taiwan's will to fight with operations designed to undermine public support and national morale.

Despite the shifting military balance in favor of the PRC, a "brute force" invasion of Taiwan remains an unlikely scenario in the near term.<sup>16</sup> An amphibious invasion of Taiwan would require the PRC's largely untested forces to first establish local air superiority and sea control around the Taiwan Strait. Next, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would have to cross the hundred-mile strait with sufficient ground forces to overcome Taiwan's army and subdue a nation of 23 million, all the while maintaining logistical support in the face of Taiwanese resistance and probable U.S. intervention. Even with the PRC's dramatically improved capabilities, such an operation would be extraordinarily perilous. Accordingly a campaign of coercion remains the more likely PRC course of action against Taiwan.<sup>17</sup> But unfortunately for Taiwan, the PRC's coercive capabilities are extremely robust.

**Economic Coercion:** Given the extensive economic interdependence that has developed in recent years, the PRC could inflict significant disruption on Taiwan without even resorting to military force. The PRC could employ export and import sanctions, seizure of Taiwanese assets, harassment of Taiwanese businessmen on the mainland, and



manipulation of stock and commodities markets.<sup>18</sup> Although “non-kinetic,” the objective of economic coercion is similar to that of military coercion in that it seeks to encourage a “regime change” by undermining support for the Taiwanese government. As with coercive military operations, the goal is to force concessions by undermining Taiwanese morale.<sup>19</sup>

**Military Coercion:** The most likely instruments of military coercion against Taiwan are the PLA Navy and the PLA’s Second Artillery Corps, which controls the PRC’s short-range range ballistic missiles (SRBMs). The dramatic rise in the capabilities of these forces has been thoroughly documented.<sup>20</sup> This paper will briefly summarize these force capabilities in order to analyze their potential employment in a military coercion campaign, and the possible impact on Taiwan’s will to fight.

**Naval Forces:** The PLA Navy is now the largest naval force in Asia, and it includes 61 attack submarines, 29 destroyers, and 45 frigates.<sup>21</sup> Of particular concern are 12 highly capable *Kilo*-class diesel submarines purchased from Russia, with the eight newest models capable of launching sophisticated SS-N-27B anti-ship cruise missiles (ASCM).<sup>22</sup> The PLA Navy will also field at least 10 of the less-capable, but still very dangerous *Song*-class (one of which broached close to the USS *Kitty Hawk* in October of 2006), as well as handful of nuclear-powered attack subs.<sup>23</sup> Of the rapidly-expanding surface force, the most dangerous are the four Russian-built *Sovremenny*-class destroyers, capable of launching the deadly SS-N-22 *Sunburn* ASCMs. In the face of PRC naval expansion Taiwan has simply not kept up.

PRC strategists are studying the possibility of imposing a blockade on Taiwan as a means of undermining the Taiwanese will to fight.<sup>24</sup> Analysts disagree regarding the ability of the PRC to effectively blockade Taiwan.<sup>25</sup> Recent studies, however, strongly suggest that a PRC submarine blockade could succeed in overwhelming Taiwan’s anti-submarine warfare

forces, severely restricting merchant shipping into the island, and largely shutting down the critical ports of Kaohsiung and Keelung.<sup>26</sup> Taiwan – bereft of natural resources and highly dependent on trade and imported oil – would almost certainly experience an economic and political crisis. Even with assistance from the U.S. Navy, Taiwan would face a daunting challenge in keeping open its vital sea lines of communication if forced to contend with the PLA Navy’s ultra-quiet diesel submarines and advanced ASCMs.

Missile Forces: During the 1996 missile exercises, which raised so much alarm in Taipei and Washington, the PRC was capable of deploying some 200 “fairly inaccurate” SRBMs against Taiwan.<sup>27</sup> Today, the number of SRBMs deployed against Taiwan is approximately 1,000, including newer versions with improved accuracy, range, and payload.<sup>28</sup> This SRBM force continues to grow at the rate of about 100 per year.<sup>29</sup> Clearly the PRC has the capability to carry out a new missile blockade that would be much more sustained and damaging than the coercive operations in 1996.

Moreover, if the PRC elected to launch a surprise SRBM strike against Taiwan itself, the island’s defenses would be overwhelmed. In 2006, Taiwan’s National Security Council warned that PLA tactics call for “800 ballistic missiles to be launched in a 6-wave, 12-hour long saturation missile attack on Taiwan,” and that cruise missiles could strike “more than 100 key targets in Taiwan.”<sup>30</sup> An officer of Taiwan’s military intelligence center warned that the PRC could hit “our airports’ runways, electricity generation facilities and military, as well as civilian logistic units.”<sup>31</sup>

As an alternative (or in addition), the PRC could employ terror tactics: Following the example of Nazi Germany’s use of V-2s, or the “War of the Cities” during the Iran–Iraq War, the PRC could strike Taipei and other Taiwanese population centers with scores of SRBMs.<sup>32</sup>

The strategy of “terror bombing” involves large-scale air attacks against population centers as a means of undermining civilian morale and producing turmoil in the target state.<sup>33</sup>

According to the theory, the target government would have to surrender, or face being overthrown by the terrorized citizens. The PRC might hope in this way to demoralizing the Taiwanese people and bring about a collapse of the national will to fight.

Still more daunting for Taiwan, the PRC might employ the above measures simultaneously. Economic sanctions, combined with a naval blockade and missile strikes, would certainly result in massive economic disruption on Taiwan. In addition, the PRC is likely to employ cyber attacks and information operations in a further attempt to sow demoralization and panic among the Taiwanese.<sup>34</sup> But would such measures succeed in undermining Taiwan’s national morale to the extent necessary to bring about a rapid collapse of the will to fight?

### **Taiwan’s Will to Fight is Unlikely to Collapse Quickly**

Despite this seemingly bleak strategic environment, there are several reasons to be confident that Taiwan will maintain its fighting spirit: Potential PRC coercion methods such as economic sanctions and terror bombing are problematic and likely to backfire. On Taiwan, the islanders have developed a distinct national consciousness, with a popular consensus in favor of maintaining de-facto independence. In a conflict, morale of the islanders will be bolstered by their confidence in international support, while the resolve of Taiwan’s leaders will be hardened by the realization that they are fighting on “death ground.”

**Ineffectiveness of Economic Coercion:** Economic coercion has an unimpressive record of success in changing the behavior of a target state in a significant way: Indeed, it

often backfires.<sup>35</sup> A PRC economic coercion campaign against Taiwan would face major disadvantages. For example, Taiwan, with its advanced economy and massive foreign exchange reserves, is relatively well suited to survive an economic shock.<sup>36</sup>

Political factors further erode the likelihood that the PRC could successfully employ economic coercion against Taiwan. Historically, economic coercion has been less likely to succeed when, as is the case with Taiwan, the target country has a history of animosity with the country employing coercion.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, economic coercion is more likely to fail when the coercing state attempts to force a regime change in the target state, often producing instead a rally of popular support to the target government.<sup>38</sup> In Taiwan's case, therefore, efforts by the PRC to subvert Taiwan's de-facto sovereignty and democratic government through economic coercion are likely to be counter-productive.

**“Terror Bombing” Does not Work:** Intense debate over the efficacy of strategic bombing has been raging for decades and is likely to continue. Nevertheless, the theory of “terror bombing” – forcing a surrender or regime change through aerial attacks on civilian areas – has been widely discredited.<sup>39</sup> If the PRC elects to pursue a campaign of terror bombing, there is little that Taiwan can do to prevent hundreds of SRBMs from striking the island. Such attacks, however, are not likely to turn the Taiwanese against their democratically elected government. While there is some evidence that missiles strikes are more demoralizing to a civilian population than bombing, this tactic appears to be no more successful in forcing a regime change than traditional terror bombing.<sup>40</sup> As Professor Vego explains: “[T]here is no case in history in which a population made common cause with the attacker bombing them and killing their loved ones against their own government.”<sup>41</sup>

**Distinct Taiwanese National Consciousness:** The Taiwanese, now long politically separated from the mainland, have developed a national consciousness increasingly distinct from that of the PRC.<sup>42</sup> Approximately seventy percent of the population are native Taiwanese speakers, and this dialect – growing in use on the island – is “mutually unintelligible” with the mainland’s Mandarin.<sup>43</sup> Disinclined to provoke Beijing, but comfortable with Taiwan’s de-facto independence and democratic government, the vast majority of Taiwanese are not interested in “unification” under the terms offered by the PRC.<sup>44</sup> Granted, when democracy arrived on the island, ethnic tension and bitter internal political struggles soon followed.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, there is a broad consensus on the critical issue – The Taiwanese are willing to fight if attacked.<sup>46</sup>

**Confidence in Allied Support:** A weaker target state is much more likely to successfully resist attack if that state receives assistance from allies.<sup>47</sup> Not surprisingly then, the will to fight among the Taiwanese is strengthened by their confidence that they will not have to fight the PRC alone.<sup>48</sup> This confidence has a strong foundation. The Taiwanese have every reason to anticipate that the United States – and Japan – will provide critical support in the event of PRC aggression.

**Assistance from the United States:** Taiwan’s confidence that U.S. forces will intervene is well-founded. Granted, U.S. policy toward Taiwan – incorporating the “One-China Policy,” the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), and a series of communiqués and assurances – is often labeled “strategic ambiguity.”<sup>49</sup> Taiwan, however, has long enjoyed strong, bi-partisan support in the U.S. Congress.<sup>50</sup> Under the TRA, Congress declared that it considers “any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means,

*including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States.”*<sup>51</sup>

Taiwan’s confidence in U.S. assistance received a major boost during the 1996 Strait Crisis, when the U.S. dispatched its naval forces to counter PRC coercion. Despite growing U.S.-PRC economic ties in subsequent years, the U.S. security commitment to Taiwan has remained steadfast. Early in his administration President George W. Bush seemed to move in the direction of “strategic clarity” when he warned that the United States would do “whatever it takes” to defend Taiwan.<sup>52</sup> Senior administration officials echoed similar sentiments.<sup>53</sup> Despite tension between the Bush administration and the administration of Taiwanese President Chen Shui-bian, security cooperation between the United States and Taiwan has increased significantly in recent years.<sup>54</sup> And during the March 2008 Taiwan presidential elections, the U.S. again demonstrated its resolve by dispatching two aircraft carriers to the waters near the Strait.<sup>55</sup> Such demonstrations of U.S. support will continue to reinforce Taiwan’s confidence and bolster its will to fight in a crisis.

*Assistance from Japan:* A series of developments since the 1996 Strait Crisis should give the Taiwanese increased confidence that Japan will come to their assistance in the event of a PRC attack. In the wake of the 1996 “missile blockade,” efforts began to revive the U.S.–Japan alliance, which at that time was regarded by many observers as moribund in the post-cold war security environment.<sup>56</sup> The result in September 1997 was a set of revised “Guidelines for Japan–U.S. Defense Cooperation,” which made clear that U.S.–Japan security cooperation was not limited to defense of the Japanese home islands.<sup>57</sup> Rather, this cooperation extended to “situations in areas surrounding Japan” that impact Japan’s peace and security.

The “situations in areas surrounding Japan” language was long regarded as a masterpiece of strategic ambiguity, leaving open to interpretation whether Japan would intervene and cooperate with the United States in a defense of Taiwan scenario. Yet even as the Guidelines were being revised in 1997, Japanese officials outraged the PRC when they admitted that “areas surrounding Japan” included the Taiwan Strait.<sup>58</sup> In 2005 the United States and Japan took the Taiwan-focused cooperation a step further when they agreed on a set of common regional strategic objectives that included encouraging “the peaceful resolution of issues concerning the Taiwan Strait through dialogue.”<sup>59</sup> More recently, during the tense run-up to Taiwan’s presidential election, the director of Japan’s Defense Policy Bureau took another step toward resolving any remaining ambiguity when he explained that an emergency in the Taiwan Strait is “not [merely] a matter of the Japan–U.S. security cooperation, but also a matter of Japan's national security.”<sup>60</sup>

It is not surprising that Japan, already concerned about the PRC’s rapidly modernizing military and its aggressive actions in the East China Sea, views a Taiwan crisis as a matter of Japanese national security.<sup>61</sup> A PRC in possession of Taiwan would be in a strong position to project power into Japan’s sea lines of communication, threatening its vital trade.<sup>62</sup> The growing appreciation of Taiwan’s strategic importance in Japan can only encourage Taiwanese confidence and bolster its will to fight.

**Death Ground – Facing a Regime Change:** Sun Tzu warned against facing an enemy whose forces were on “death ground,” where they must fight “with the courage of desperation” in order to survive.<sup>63</sup> Modern research supports this ancient warning. When faced with a coercive campaign demanding a regime change, a target state is significantly less likely to capitulate.<sup>64</sup> A conflict with the PRC will almost certainly place the Taiwanese

regime on “death ground” – facing the end of Taiwan’s de-facto sovereignty and democratic government.<sup>65</sup>

This “unification” scenario would be of particular concern for Taiwan’s national political and military leadership. Before these Taiwanese leaders lay down their arms and place the safety of themselves and their families at the mercy of the PRC, they might well be inclined to stop and contemplate the fate of other opponents of the mainland regime – those in Tibet, or Tiananmen Square for example.<sup>66</sup> If exile to PRC “re-education camps” – or even massacre – is a realistic possibility, Taiwan’s leaders will maintain the will to fight, even in an extended conflict.

### **Theory of Victory for Taiwan – Outlast the Enemy**

*A Counter-Argument:* Even granting that Taiwan’s will to fight might not collapse quickly, and that the United States will take effective action to extend Taiwan’s endurance, a skeptic might argue that, in the long run, Taiwan will have to submit to PRC coercion. No country, even one with a robust will to fight, can be expected to endure indefinitely against overwhelming odds. The PRC views “unification” with Taiwan as a matter of regime survival, and its authoritarian leaders will make any sacrifice to achieve their objective.<sup>67</sup> Accordingly, the PRC’s advantages in numbers and geography will eventually force Taiwan to submit, even if the Taiwanese demonstrate a determined will to fight.

*Rebuttal:* Taiwan’s will to fight does not need to endure indefinitely – it needs to outlast that of the PRC. While PRC leadership claims it is prepared to make any sacrifice to ensure Taiwan’s eventual unification, this strategic communication should not necessarily be taken at face value. Analysts should not underestimate the strain that a Taiwan conflict will



impose on the PRC. Nor should they overestimate PRC endurance. Like Taiwan, the PRC faces massive economic disruption in the event of a conflict. The PRC would certainly face economic sanctions from its most important trading partners: Taiwan, the United States, and Japan. Other important partners in Europe and Asia would likely join in bringing economic pressure on the PRC.<sup>68</sup> Could the PRC regime, with its legitimacy so dependent on economic development, sustain a recession and large-scale unemployment?

There is reason to question whether the new generation of Chinese share the authoritarian regime's obsession with "unification."<sup>69</sup> After 20 years of economic liberalization and greater interaction with the outside world, ordinary Chinese have become "increasingly apathetic" toward regime propaganda.<sup>70</sup> Outside of the Beijing power elite, there may be a "silent majority" that does not wish to sacrifice the PRC's economic progress for a risky military adventure.<sup>71</sup> Concerns about the level of commitment in the new generation have been noted even in the PLA. The PRC leadership is uncertain about the fighting spirit of their army, untested since an unimpressive performance against Vietnam in 1979.<sup>72</sup> PLA recruiters often see the new generation of soldiers and officers as "soft" and "materialistic."<sup>73</sup> A protracted conflict, rather than failure to coerce Taiwan into "unification," may be the greatest threat to the survival of the PRC's authoritarian regime.

## CONCLUSIONS

As demonstrated above, the PRC possesses the ability to inflict major disruption on Taiwan by use of economic and military coercion. Through economic sanctions, naval blockade, and missile strikes, the PRC would seek to undermine Taiwanese national morale and public support, thereby degrading the will to fight. Taiwan's will to fight, however, is

not likely to suffer a quick collapse. Taiwan's leadership will be on "death ground" and will see perseverance as a matter of survival. Taiwanese morale will be bolstered by their confidence that help from the United States and Japan is on the way. Historically ineffective measures such as economic sanctions and terror bombing are likely to be insufficient to overcome Taiwan's advantages.

This likely endurance of Taiwan's will to fight has important implications for U.S. strategy and operational plans. If involved in a major Taiwan Strait crisis, U.S. commanders in the western Pacific will of course have their hands-full contesting air superiority and sea control around Taiwan. U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) must not, however, lose focus on supporting Taiwan's will to fight. In the early stages of a conflict, U.S. submarines, surface ships, and aircraft – operating far beyond the view of the Taiwanese – will lend little support to the islanders' morale, no matter how effective their performance.

Taiwan's internal communications will likely be disrupted by PRC missile and cyber attacks. It is possible the mass of the island's population will have little information about U.S. support. Instead, the Taiwanese may be watching PRC missiles and bombs raining down on their harbors and infrastructure, while PRC information operations bombard the island with propaganda declaring that their situation is hopeless and that the United States has abandoned Taiwan. While a quick collapse Taiwanese fighting spirit is unlikely, this does not mean that U.S. leaders should be complacent in efforts to support the Taiwanese will to fight. There are measures PACOM could take that would significantly bolster Taiwanese morale and enforce the will to fight, without diverting major resources from force-on-force combat operations against the PRC.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Mitigate Disruption on Taiwan**

It is unlikely that Taiwanese forces, even with U.S. assistance, will be able to prevent the PRC from causing massive disruption on the island during a conflict. The United States, however, has the ability to help mitigate this disruption, easing the distress on the population and thus supporting Taiwan's will to fight. In recent years U.S. forces have acquired significant experience in humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) and reconstruction operations. PACOM should leverage this experience and coordinate relief and reconstruction efforts for Taiwan with the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the Department of State, and other appropriate agencies. In a Taiwan crisis, U.S. forces could focus on repair to port facilities and other critical infrastructure. In addition, the United States could make efforts to augment merchant shipping into Taiwan, to help off-set the effects of a PRC blockade.

**Port and Infrastructure Repair:** During a conflict with the PRC, hardship on Taiwan could be mitigated if damage to the critical ports and infrastructure can be repaired quickly. Expertise and resources from U.S. military engineering units – Amphibious Battalions and Underwater Construction Teams from the Navy Seabees, for example – could play an important role in assisting the Taiwanese in this mission. PACOM, coordinating with OFDA, could also bring to bear disaster-relief resources from civilian agencies, contractors, and non-governmental organizations. Japan could also be expected to make major contributions to the relief effort.

The U.S. can begin liaison and planning for such efforts quickly. At present, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has several representatives in Kaohsiung under the anti-

terrorism Container Security Initiative (CSI).<sup>74</sup> This presence could be augmented gradually with visits by liaisons and survey teams of military engineers. These representatives can work with Taiwanese officials to identify vulnerabilities in Taiwan's infrastructure and areas where U.S. forces or other agencies can assist in a crisis.

**Merchant Shipping:** Whether through attrition or fear, merchant shipping into Taiwan may become scarce during PRC coercive operations.<sup>75</sup> The United States and Japan should be prepared to augment merchant shipping, subsidizing higher premiums and insurance rates if necessary, in order to help maintain the strategic lifelines into Taiwan. If required, U.S. Military Sealift Command assets and Japan's vast national merchant fleet could also be employed. Self-sustaining MSC vessels in particular may be of value in ports that have suffered serious infrastructure damage.

**Coordinating International Relief Efforts:** Many states may wish to assist Taiwan without directly confronting the PRC. Even states that would be reluctant to provide Taiwan with military aid might be willing to provide disaster relief and reconstruction assistance, or to help augment Taiwan's merchant shipping. PACOM should be prepared to coordinate with the Department of State to encourage and facilitate such efforts.

### **Information Operations and Strategic Communications**

The value of U.S. assistance to Taiwan's will to fight is severely undercut if the Taiwanese do not know it is taking place. As mentioned above, the PRC will likely employ cyber and kinetic attacks to shut-down communications and spread demoralizing panic on Taiwan. U.S. forces must be prepared to coordinate with Taiwan's government to carry-out information operations to publicize U.S. and international assistance. U.S. forces can also

coordinate with Taiwan's government to present effective strategic communications, reminding the Taiwanese that preservation of the island's independent, democratic government and distinct culture depend on maintaining the will to fight, and that perseverance will eventually be rewarded with reconstruction aid from the United States, Japan, and the international community. In contrast, defeat will mean occupation by a vengeful PRC, the end of Taiwan's democracy, and a Tibet-like effort by the mainland regime to extirpate Taiwan's distinct culture.

### **Intervene Quickly and Visibly**

Taiwan's confidence in U.S. assistance is a double-edged sword. Confidence in U.S. support is an important factor bolstering Taiwan's will to fight. The most devastating blow to Taiwanese morale, however, would be the belief that Taiwan had been abandoned to face the PRC alone. In the short-term, the most effective support would be that which immediately assures the leadership, military forces, and people of the Taiwan that they are not alone. Accordingly, forces that can arrive on Taiwan in the first days of a crisis may be even more important than the forces battling for air and sea control around the Taiwan Strait. Early deployments to the island will have the added benefit of sending a clear message to the PRC regarding the danger of escalation.

As detailed above, a PRC coercion campaign will succeed only if Taiwan loses its will to fight and submits to the aggressor. If Taiwan can protect its strategic center of gravity, it can outlast the PRC in a protracted struggle. By implementing these recommendations, PACOM can help to reinforce the natural strength of Taiwan's will to fight, and help ensure that the island democracy prevails.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> See Vego, VII-13; JP 3-0, *Joint Operations*, IV-9-10.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g., Khalilzad et al., 66-67; Brookes, 6; McVadon, 99. See also Taiwan ROC, *National Security Report 2006*, 70: The PRC may employ “coercion by force” in order to “deal a direct blow to the Taiwanese people’s will to resist.” *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> The only study I was able to locate on this topic is: Shelley Rigger, “When the Going Gets Tough: Measuring Taiwan’s Will to Fight” (Paper prepared for the American Political Science Association annual meeting, Conference Group on Taiwan Studies panel entitled “Taiwan and the Changing Realities of International Politics.” Chicago, 2 September 2004).

<sup>4</sup> Ross, 208-15.

<sup>5</sup> Rahman, “Ballistic Missiles in China’s Ant-Taiwan Blockade Strategy” 216.

<sup>6</sup> Rahman, “Ballistic Missiles in China’s Ant-Taiwan Blockade Strategy” 216.

<sup>7</sup> Mann, 334-36; Rahman, “Ballistic Missiles in China’s Ant-Taiwan Blockade Strategy” 216-17.

<sup>8</sup> Rahman, “Ballistic Missiles in China’s Ant-Taiwan Blockade Strategy” 217.

<sup>9</sup> Glosny, 149.

<sup>10</sup> Mann, 328-29.

<sup>11</sup> Rahman, 218-19.

<sup>12</sup> Shirk, 190.

<sup>13</sup> See Pape, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Fisher, 175-76; Horowitz and Reiter, 168.

<sup>15</sup> Byman and Waxman: 15-16.

<sup>16</sup> OSD, *PRC Military Report 2008*, 44; Taiwan ROC, *National Security Report 2006*, 39; Goldstein and Murray, 179; O’Hanlon, 53; Shambaugh, 128-29.

<sup>17</sup> See Shlapak et al., 7; Brookes, 6; Khalilzad et al., 66-67; O’Hanlon, 53; Shambaugh, 128-29; Taiwan ROC, *National Security Report 2006*, 70.

<sup>18</sup> Tanner, 16-19.

<sup>19</sup> Tanner, 25-29.

<sup>20</sup> For development and capabilities of the PLA Navy: McVadon, 97-100; Goldstein and Murray, 165-79; OSD, *PRC Military Report 2008*, 4-5; Cole, 125-34. For development and capabilities of missile forces: Pollack, 60-64; OSD, *PRC Military Report 2008*, 2, 56; Chase, “China’s Second Artillery Corps,” 2-6; Murray, “PRC vs. Taiwan.”

<sup>21</sup> OSD, *PRC Military Report 2008*, 54.

<sup>22</sup> McVadon, 97; Goldstein and Murray, 165-79.

<sup>23</sup> OSD, *PRC Military Report 2008*, 4; McVadon, 97; Goldstein and Murray, 165-79; Murray, “PRC vs. Taiwan.”

<sup>24</sup> Cliff et al., 64-66.

<sup>25</sup> Compare Grubb, and Goldstein and Murray (making the case for probable PLA Navy success), with O’Hanlon, and Glosny.

<sup>26</sup> See Goldstein and Murray, 180-81; Grubb, 95-97.

<sup>27</sup> Chase, “China’s Second Artillery Corp,” 2.

<sup>28</sup> OSD, *PRC Military Report 2008*, 2.

<sup>29</sup> OSD, *PRC Military Report 2008*, 2.

<sup>30</sup> Taiwan ROC, *National Security Report 2006*, 33.

<sup>31</sup> Chung, 9.

<sup>32</sup> See McNaughton, 8-15.

<sup>33</sup> See Pape, 60.

<sup>34</sup> Taiwan ROC, *National Security Report 2006*, 34-35

<sup>35</sup> Tanner, 19-27.

<sup>36</sup> Tanner, 75, 100-102.

<sup>37</sup> Tanner, 23.

<sup>38</sup> Tanner, 23-25.

<sup>39</sup> Pape, 314-18; Horowitz and Reiter, 162-63.

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- <sup>40</sup> McNaugher, 8-15.
- <sup>41</sup> Vego, II-80.
- <sup>42</sup> Wachman, 91-124; Tucker, "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should the United States Care?" 17-18.
- <sup>43</sup> Library of Congress, Federal Research Division, *Country Profile: Taiwan*, 9; Wachman, 107-110; Republic of China, Government Information Office Website.
- <sup>44</sup> Bernier and Gold, 73-74; Rahman, "Defending Taiwan, and Why it Matters," 70-71.
- <sup>45</sup> Taiwan ROC, *National Security Report 2006*, 63-67.
- <sup>46</sup> Rigger, 4-5; Bernier and Gold, 73-74.
- <sup>47</sup> Sullivan, 516-17.
- <sup>48</sup> Rigger, 31.
- <sup>49</sup> Tucker, "Strategic Ambiguity or Strategic Clarity?" 188-98.
- <sup>50</sup> Shirk, 184; Mann, 95, 318-24.
- <sup>51</sup> U.S. Department of State Website, "Taiwan Relations Act," (emphasis added).
- <sup>52</sup> Tucker, "Strategic Ambiguity or Strategic Clarity?" 202.
- <sup>53</sup> Tucker, "Strategic Ambiguity or Strategic Clarity?" 202-203.
- <sup>54</sup> Chase, "U.S.-Taiwan Security Cooperation," 173-80.
- <sup>55</sup> Associated Press, "U.S. aircraft carriers to stay near Taiwan until Ma takes office;" Ta-chen, "US, Japan show their concern for the Strait."
- <sup>56</sup> Wang, 20-23.
- <sup>57</sup> See Japan Ministry of Defense Website.
- <sup>58</sup> "Defense Guidelines Would Cover Taiwan Strait Crisis," *Daily Yomiuri*, 18 August 1997, 1; "Gov't Reiterates Defense Stance on Taiwan Strait, *Mainichi Daily News*, 21 August 1997, 12;.
- <sup>59</sup> Department of State Website, Joint Statement of the U.S.-Japan Security Consultative Committee.
- <sup>60</sup> "Taiwan emergency 'Japan security concern,'" *Yomiuri Shimbun*, 14 March 2008.
- <sup>61</sup> See Yoshihara and Holmes, 33-35.
- <sup>62</sup> Tucker, "If Taiwan Chooses Unification, Should the United States Care?" 22.
- <sup>63</sup> Sun Tzu, 131.
- <sup>64</sup> Horowitz and Reiter, p.160.
- <sup>65</sup> Rigger, 21.
- <sup>66</sup> See Rigger, 21.
- <sup>67</sup> See Huang, 193.
- <sup>68</sup> Huang, 193-97.
- <sup>69</sup> See Hsiao, 2; Shirk, 186-87.
- <sup>70</sup> Yu, 28.
- <sup>71</sup> Shirk, 186-87; Hsiao, 2.
- <sup>72</sup> Lam, 5.
- <sup>73</sup> Lam, 6.
- <sup>74</sup> U.S. Customs and Border Protection Website.
- <sup>75</sup> See Grubb, 82-85.

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